

# Genesis 13 Commentary

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Summary Chart of The Book of Genesis								
Focus	Foundation Events (Four Events) (Events Predominant)				Foundation People (Four People) (People Predominant)			
Divisions	Creation (Ge 1-2)	Fall (Ge 3-5)	Flood (Ge 6-9)	Nations (Ge 10-12)	Abraham's Faith (Ge 12-24)	Isaac's Family (Ge 25-26)	Jacob's Conflicts (Ge 27-36)	Joseph's Calamity (Ge 37-50)
Topics	Beginning of the Human Race (Race As A Whole)				Beginning of the Hebrew Race (Family of Abraham)			
	Faithfulness of Mankind (Noah)				Faithfulness of One Man's Family (Abraham)			
	Historical				Biographical			
Place	Eastward From Eden to Ur				Westward From Canaan to Egypt			
Time	~2000+ Years (20% of Genesis) (~4004-2090BC)				About 300 Years 193 Yr in Canaan, 93 Yr in Egypt (80% of Genesis) (2090-1804BC)			
	Primeval History of Humanity				Patriarchal History of Israel			
Author	Moses							

## BEGINNINGS

- Ge 1:1-25 - The Universe (Everything)
- Ge 1:26-2:25 - The Human Race
- Ge 3:1-7 - Sin Enters the World
- Ge 3:8-24- God Promises Redemption from Bondage to Sin
- Ge 4:1-15 - Family Life
- Ge 4:16ff - Civilization
- Ge 10:1-11:32 - The Nations of the World
- Ge 12-50 The Story of Israel and the Jews



**Abraham believed God** (Gal 3:6<sup>±</sup>, Ge 15:5,6<sup>±</sup>)

**John Phillips Outline - [Borrow Exploring Genesis](#)**

**The Progenitor: Abraham** Ge 12:1–25:18

The Price of Faith (Ge 13:1–18)

1. The Marks of a Spiritual Man (Ge 13:1–4)
  1. Separation (Ge 13:1)
  2. Sanctification (Ge 13:2–3)
  3. Sacrifice (Ge 13:4)
2. The Mind of a Spiritual Man (Ge 13:5–9)
  1. Worrying Circumstances (Ge 13:5–6)
  2. Wicked Neighbors (Ge 13:7)
  3. Weaker Brethren (Ge 13:8–9)
    1. Spiritual Directness (Ge 13:8a)
    2. Spiritual Discernment (Ge 13:8b)
    3. Spiritual Dignity (Ge 13:9)
3. The Moves of a Spiritual Man (Ge 13:10–18)
  1. Restrained by God (Ge 13:10–13)
    1. Lot's Weak Devotions
    2. Lot's Worldly Desires (Ge 13:10)
    3. Lot's Wrong Decisions (Ge 13:11–13)
  2. Reassured by God (Ge 13:14–16)
    1. As to His Possessions (Ge 13:14–15)
    2. As to His Posterity (Ge 13:16)
    3. Regulated by God (Ge 13:17–18)

**Genesis 13:1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him.**

- the south: The south of Canaan; as in leaving Egypt, it is said he "came from the south," (ver. 3,) and the southern part of the promised land lay north-east of Egypt. Ge 12:9-20 20:1 21:33 Jos 10:40 18:5 1Sa 27:10 2Sa 24:7
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## GENESIS 13 OVERVIEW

- Genesis 13:1, Abram and Lot return with great riches out of Egypt;
- Genesis 13:6, Strife arises between Abram's herdsmen and those of Lot;
- Genesis 13:8, Abram meekly refers it to Lot to choose his part of the country,
- Genesis 13:10, and Lot goes to Sodom;
- Genesis 13:14, God renews the promise to Abram;
- Genesis 13:18, He removes to Hebron, and there builds an altar.

### Related Passages:

Genesis 24:62 (**ISAAC AT THE NEGEV**) Now Isaac had come from going to Beer-lahai-roi; for **he was living in the Negev**.

The Negev (red),  
Judean Mts (salmon), Judean Desert (pink)

## ABRAM GOES UP AFTER "GOING DOWN"

**So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev** ([negeb](#) - "the South [country]) - **Went up** is of course referring to literal returning to the Negev, but one could see this in a spiritual sense. That is, when he went to Egypt, that was going downward spiritually speaking, but now he is returning home physically and spiritually, going "up" rather than "down." Abram returns to the **Negev** where he had been in Ge 12:9 ("Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.") Abram will return again toward **Negev** in Ge 20:1, and begin a new beginning! We all fall like Abram and so we need to imitate him (Heb 6:12+) and return to where we began. Does Jesus describe your walk in Rev 2:4+? Have you begun to take some side-trips to "Egypt?" Jesus gives us the answer for backsliding and losing our first love in the form of 3 "R's" - Remember, Repent, Re-do! If not there is one other "R" word - Remove! (Rev 2:5+). So heed the last "R" and repent!

*The Christian life is basically a series of new beginnings*

--Alexander Whyte

**Negev** ([negeb](#)) is translated in the Septuagint with [eremos](#) which means an empty or uninhabited place, a desert, a wilderness. It is the desert like region of southern Canaan, but for Abram it was the beginning of the way back.

**He and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him** - Abram returned with more than he had left with, including a handmaid named Hagar, a handmaid that turned out to be a handful!

[Warren Wiersbe](#) - Abraham learned his lesson, repented, and "went up" out of Egypt (Ge 13:1). When you disobey the will of God, the only right thing to do is to go back to the place where you left Him and make a new beginning (1 John 1:9). No failure is permanent in "the school of faith." Abraham went back to his tent and altar and the life of a "pilgrim and stranger." A casual observer of this episode might conclude, "What happened to Abraham wasn't all bad. Pharaoh gave Abraham a lot of wealth (Gen. 12:16; 13:2), and Sarah was given her own maid, Hagar (Ge 16:1). God forgave Abraham's sin, and he started over again. So, what's the big problem?" The "big problem" is that everything Abraham received in Egypt later caused trouble. Because of their great wealth, Abraham and Lot could not live together and had to separate (Ge 13:5-6). Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant, brought division and sorrow into the home (Gen. 16). Having had a taste of Egypt (the world), Lot started measuring everything by what he saw there (Ge 13:10-11), and this led to his downfall and the ruin of his family. There are no benefits from disobedience. The practical lesson from all of this is simply never abandon your altar. Stay in fellowship with the Lord no matter what the circumstances may be. If you have disobeyed and God is disciplining you, go back to the place where you left Him and make things right. Remember: "The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings." That is not an excuse for sin, but it is an encouragement for repentance.

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**Negev** ([05045](#)) ([negeb](#)) is a masculine noun meaning the South, south. Negev often (36x) refers to the area around Beersheba and south of it (Ge 12:9; 13:1; 20:1). Negev also refers to the southern district of Judah and more specifically to indicate the area south of Judah (Jer. 13:19; 17:26), but these areas are not always precisely defined. It may indicate land south of Babylon or southern Palestine (Isa. 21:1).

**Gilbrant** - The noun negev has a number of meanings. Its primary meaning is a geographic region. Because this region lay to the south of the rest of the Promised Land, the word became a synonym for *dārôm*, "south." The meaning "south" is easily understood as "toward the Negeb." That it can simply mean the cardinal

direction "south" is attested in Dan. 8:9. Indeed, in Daniel the notion of south is extended to include Egypt (Dan. 11:15, 29). The noun also means "arid land" (cf. Middle Hebrew usage), a designation which denotes a number of regions, all of which happen to be in the south (perhaps begging the question of whether the noun does have this nuance at all, or are the authors simply referring to the Negeb; see Josh. 12:8).

The region of the Negeb extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea. Beer-Sheba and Arad, the two most significant sites in the region, are in the northern region. Agriculture is possible now, and archaeological research has established that the region currently suitable for agriculture was even more suitable in the past, as the rainfall patterns in the region did not become sparse until the Early Bronze period. As one progresses southward, rainfall lessens, until one reaches the desert regions bounding the Sinai and the Red Sea. Pastoralism played a major role throughout the region (e.g., the migrations of Abraham were centered in the northern reaches of this region).

The southern part of the Negeb was long prized by Egypt on account of its copper mines. The area around Timna is renowned, and was not only the seat of Egyptian military outposts, but was in the cultural heartland of the Midianites as the Israelites entered the Promised Land. The Egyptians maintained waystations throughout the region. The Israelites, once in control of the region, likewise exploited the resource. The construction of the ports of Ezion-Geber and Elath (1 Ki. 9:26) was a direct infrastructural response to the mines. The area became a region for religious pilgrims, with the tradition of the mountain of Yahweh (Sinai/Horeb/Teman) in the vicinity. The remains of the village of Deir Alla and its shrine shed light on popular religion of the day (ninth century b.c.).

The region was divided among the tribes of Simeon and Judah, though Judah came to dominate the entirety of the land (Josh. 15:20-62; 19:1-7). The area was mainly home to military outposts and forts during the monarchy. Forts were built in the eleventh and tenth centuries b.c. Villages thinned in the ninth and eighth centuries. The Assyrian kings Sargon II (720 b.c.) and Sennacherib (701 b.c.) destroyed most of the villages as well as the military installations. They were rebuilt in the seventh century b.c., as protection against the Edomites and, later, the Babylonians.

A number of significant events transpired in the Negeb. Many of the Patriarchal narratives were set in this region. Moses (Num. 14:44), Saul (1 Sam. 14) and David (1 Sam. 30) all fought wars here against the Amalekites. Jeremiah prophesied restoration, that both agricultural land (32:44) and flocks (33:13) would again be in the hands of their rightful Israelite owners throughout Judah, including in the Negeb.

**Negeb - Negev(36), South(11), south(45), south side(2), south\*(3), southeast\*(1), southern(2), southward(9).** Gen. 12:9; Gen. 13:1; Gen. 13:3; Gen. 13:14; Gen. 20:1; Gen. 24:62; Gen. 28:14; Exod. 27:9; Exod. 36:23; Exod. 38:9; Exod. 40:24; Num. 13:17; Num. 13:22; Num. 13:29; Num. 21:1; Num. 33:40; Num. 34:3; Num. 34:4; Num. 35:5; Deut. 1:7; Deut. 34:3; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 11:2; Jos. 11:16; Jos. 12:8; Jos. 15:1; Jos. 15:2; Jos. 15:3; Jos. 15:4; Jos. 15:7; Jos. 15:8; Jos. 15:19; Jos. 15:21; Jos. 17:9; Jos. 17:10; Jos. 18:5; Jos. 18:13; Jos. 18:14; Jos. 18:15; Jos. 18:16; Jos. 18:19; Jos. 19:34; Jdg. 1:9; Jdg. 1:15; Jdg. 1:16; Jdg. 21:19; 1 Sam. 14:5; 1 Sam. 20:41; 1 Sam. 27:10; 1 Sam. 30:1; 1 Sam. 30:14; 2 Sam. 24:7; 1 Ki. 7:25; 1 Ki. 7:39; 1 Chr. 9:24; 1 Chr. 26:15; 1 Chr. 26:17; 2 Chr. 4:4; 2 Chr. 4:10; 2 Chr. 28:18; Ps. 126:4; Isa. 21:1; Isa. 30:6; Jer. 13:19; Jer. 17:26; Jer. 32:44; Jer. 33:13; Ezek. 20:46; Ezek. 20:47; Ezek. 21:4; Ezek. 40:2; Ezek. 46:9; Ezek. 47:1; Ezek. 47:19; Ezek. 48:10; Ezek. 48:16; Ezek. 48:17; Ezek. 48:28; Ezek. 48:33; Dan. 8:4; Dan. 8:9; Dan. 11:5; Dan. 11:6; Dan. 11:9; Dan. 11:11; Dan. 11:14; Dan. 11:15; Dan. 11:25; Dan. 11:29; Dan. 11:40; Obad. 1:19; Obad. 1:20; Zech. 7:7; Zech. 14:4; Zech. 14:10

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**John Phillips** - Abram had skirted the world once. Now he put distance between himself and Egypt by getting back to Bethel, the house of God, and re-establishing his pilgrim character. He pitched his tent at Bethel and restored fellowship with God....Years ago a woman wanted a new coachman. She advertised and before long had three applicants, to each of whom she put the same question. "You know that steep hill just outside town and that narrow spot where the road drops away to a gully? How close could you drive my coach to the edge without losing your nerve?" The first man said, "Madam, if the wheels of the coach came within six inches of the edge I would feel quite safe." The second coachman said, "Madam, I reckon even if one of the wheels went clean over the edge I could hold those horses and recover the coach without harm." It was the third coachman who secured the job. "Madam," he said, "I would keep that coach as far away from that gully as I possibly could." That is what sanctification is all about. It is not trying to get as close to the world as possible without losing one's testimony, it is keeping as far away from it as we can by keeping close to Christ. (BORROW [Exploring Genesis](#))

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## Rod Mattoon - Outlines That Teach Genesis Chapter 13

1. The Return Back Home Ge 13:1 Abram leaves Egypt and heads homeward.
2. The Riches of Abram Ge 13:2 He had cattle, silver, and gold.
3. The Rededication of Abram Ge 13:3, 4 Abram returns to the place where he spiritually left the Lord and calls upon the Lord.
4. The Relative of Abram Ge 13:5 His nephew, Lot, had great wealth.
5. The Resentment in the Clan Ge 13:6, 7 The huge size of the flocks caused strife as they competed for water and grazing area.
6. The Reasoning of Abram Ge 13:8, 9 Abram provides a solution and suggests that they separate their families. He gives Lot first choice of the land he desires. Abram considered their love for one another more important than their investments.
7. The Resolution of Lot. Ge 13:10, 11 Lot chooses all the plain of Jordan for his home.
8. The Residence of Abram Ge 13:12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan.
9. The Reproach of the Men of Sodom Ge 13:13 The men of Sodom were wicked sinners before the Lord.
10. The Requirements for Blessing Ge 13:14-17 Lift up your eyes. Land was to be explored.
11. The Reverence for God Ge 13:18 Abram goes to Hebron and builds an altar unto the Lord. (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis - [hardbound copies are scarce](#) - [here is the very affordable digital version](#) - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc)

**Genesis 13:2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.**

- Ge 24:35 26:12,13 De 8:18 1Sa 2:7 Job 1:3,10 22:21-25 Ps 112:1-3 Pr 3:9,10 10:22 Mt 6:33 1Ti 4:8
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### Related Passages:

Genesis 12:5 Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 12:16 Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.

## A PARENTHETICAL EXPLANATION

**Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold** - Moses adds this parenthetical statement to help us understand the subsequent strife which would arise with Lot, who also has a lot of livestock. Note how God has blessed Abram not only with livestock but precious metals. Abram's wealth was from his time in Haran (Ge 12:5) and was also from the Pharaoh's gifts in Ge 12:15-16.

**THOUGHT** - In the Old Testament obedience would often result in material blessing. In the New Testament obedience most significantly results in spiritual blessings. To be rich spiritually (cf Eph 1:3+) is far more precious than to be rich materially (cf Eph 3:20+). The former endures forever, while the latter only lasts a lifetime. May God's Spirit enable each of us to obey Jesus' command to "**seek** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Mt 6:33+)

**Bob Utley** - In the Ancient Near East there were several ways of accumulating and retaining wealth - precious metals, jewels, clothing, food stuffs, livestock

**U. Cassuto** sees a parallel with Ge 12:10 and the statement "Now Abram was very **RICH** [כָּבֵד kābhēd] in cattle, in silver, and in gold. The word כָּבֵד kābhēd [literally, 'heavy'] is in antithetic parallelism to what is narrated at the commencement of the section (Ge 12:10: for the famine was **SEVERE** [כָּבֵד kābhēd]): then Abram suffered because the famine was כָּבֵד kābhēd ['heavy', 'severe'] now he is very כָּבֵד kābhēd ['heavy', 'laden', 'rich'] with possessions. (BORROW [A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Vol. 2](#))

**Genesis 13:3 He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the**

- from: Ge 12:6,8,9
- Bethel and Ai: i.e., The place which was afterwards called Bethel by Jacob, and so called when Moses wrote; for its first name was Luz. (Ge 28:19.)
- Reciprocal: Genesis 13:1 - the south Genesis 35:1 - Bethel Leviticus 13:3 - deeper Hebrews 11:9 - dwelling
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Genesis 28:19 He (JACOB) called the name of that place **Bethel**; however, previously the name of the **city had been Luz**.

Genesis 35:1 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to **Bethel** and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

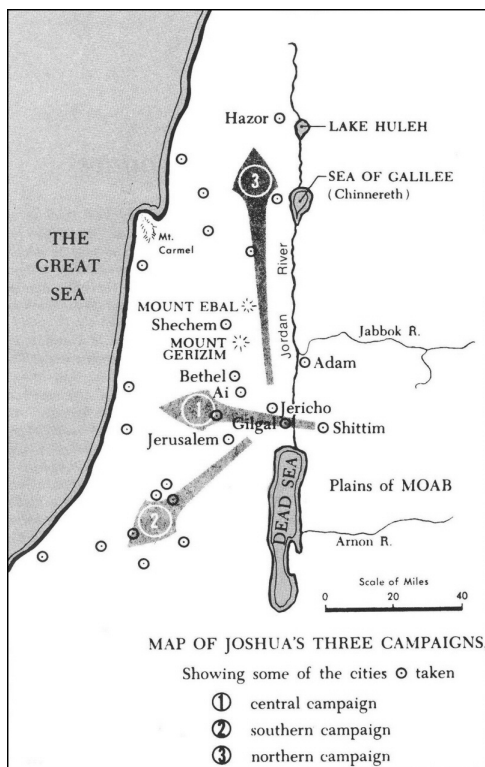
Judges 1:23 The house of Joseph spied out **Bethel** (now the name of the city was **formerly Luz**).

Hebrews 11:9+ By faith he (ABRAHAM) lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

ABRAM RETRACES STEPS TO NEGEV - Click to enlarge - Holman Bible Atlas ([digital book](#); [Hardcover](#))  
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One of best resources for Bible maps. Please do not reproduce this map.

### ABRAM'S JOURNEY TAKES HIM BACK TO BETHEL

He went on his journeys ([massa](#)) from the Negev ([negeb](#); Lxx = [eremos](#)) as far as [Bethel](#) ("house of God") - NLT = "Then they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel." The verb **journeys** ([massa](#) = pulling up, breaking up camp) describes Abram as picking up his tents and moving from camp to camp. Note that **Bethel** was originally called Luz, but here Moses uses the name **Bethel** which Jacob gave to Luz in Ge 28:19.



BETHEL AND AI  
[Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

**To the place where his tent** - Remember that Abram's **tent** was a picture of a man who was a pilgrim and a stranger, because "by faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in **tents**...for he was looking ([ekdechomai](#) picturesque progressive imperfect, his steady and patient waiting in spite of disappointment) for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Heb 11:9,10+). He could have afforded a fortress but he was satisfied with a tent. Am I? Are you?



**THOUGHT** - Abraham's theme song was "[This World is Not My Home](#) (play)." Is this your "theme song" dear disciple of Christ? Can you sing it with sincerity and [gusto](#)? If not, you need to learn the words, so that you too can live (and sing) like Abraham, as alien, as in a foreign land, for we are to be **IN** the world but not **OF** the world, beloved (Jn 17:14, 15, 16, cf Col 3:2-4+). I am a retired physician in my 70's and have 2 close physician friends also in their 70's who are retired and both are building new, expensive vacation homes far away from their hometown of Austin, Texas. One is a non-believer with whom I have shared Christ (but we have not seen the end of his story yet I pray), so this just might be the best home away from home he will ever experience. The other is a believer, perhaps a little like Lot, but a righteous man by faith (cf 2Pe 2:7+). Sadly, he is storing up for himself treasure on earth and not in heaven, for at age 77 he does not have that long to enjoy his new vacation home. I do not mean to be critical, but mention these two men to illustrate how tempting it is for all of us to store up for ourselves treasures on earth and forget that we are aliens and strangers (1Pe 1:1+, 1Pe 2:11+) who have the inestimably precious privilege of storing up for ourselves eternal treasure in heaven (Mt 6:20+, cf 1Pe 1:4-5+, 1Ti 4:8+). Where is your heart beloved? Is your treasure on earth or is it in heaven because that is the test? (see Mt 6:21+) Are you content with a "tent" now, knowing Jesus is preparing for you a "mansion" in heaven in the future (Jn 14:3+)? See also Vertical Vision.

**To the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between [Bethel](#) and Ai** - Back to the beginning is the best place to go when you have disobeyed God. This reminds me of Jesus' words to the church at Ephesus when He declared "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.'" (Rev 2:4-5+) Abram remembered **Bethel** ("house of God") and returned and in the following passages did the deeds we would expect from a man of faith. Far from removing Abram's lampstand, God lit it brightly and blessed him mightily. Abram is revered by 3 world religions - Christianity, Judaism and Muslims.

**THOUGHT** - Dearly beloved saint, have you disobeyed God's good and acceptable and perfect will for your life and willfully made a costly "trip to Egypt" (so to speak) like Abram did in Genesis 12? Most of us have at one time or another. But we too like Abram can return to where we departed from the highway of holiness. John assures us that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9+) Confess, repent (do a 180!), and return, for your Father is waiting to welcome you with open arms (cf prodigal - read Lk 15:20+) and will not turn you away.

#### ***Back to Bethel***

**William MacDonald** add "Underlying Abram's return to Bethel ... from Egypt was a return to fellowship with God. "Back to Bethel" is the rallying cry for all who have wandered from the Lord." (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

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**Journeys** (stages) ([04550](#)) [massa](#) from **nasa** = to pull out tent pegs, break camp) breaking camp, a pulling up, setting out, a journey. The main idea of massa' is that of a group of people gathering up movable property (perhaps with the picture of pulling out tent stakes) and setting out for a new geographical location. This is a permanent move of the household and property, as opposed to travel in general. It can denote the seasonal cyclic travel of pastoral nomads or the movement of a more sedentary population.

**Massa** - 12x in 11v - journey(1), journeys(7), order of march(1), set(2), stages(1). Gen. 13:3; Ex 17:1; Ex 40:36; Ex. 40:38; Nu 10:2; Nu 10:6; Nu 10:12; Nu 10:28; Nu 33:1; Nu 33:2; Dt. 10:11

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the significance of Bethel in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Two towns named Bethel appear in the Bible. The Bethel of lesser significance, a village in the [Negev](#), is mentioned as one of the places where David sent spoils to his friends, the elders of Judah (1 Samuel 30:26–27). Another Bethel, a city of foremost importance in the Bible, was located about 11 miles north of Jerusalem near Ai. A major trading center, Bethel stood at a crossroads, with its north-south road passing through the central hill country from Hebron in the south to Shechem in the north, and its main east-west route leading from Jericho to the Mediterranean Sea. Only Jerusalem is mentioned more frequently than Bethel in the Old Testament.

The Hebrew name *Bethel* means "house of God" and refers to both the city and the site of a major sanctuary that was established there for the northern kingdom of Israel. Bethel sat at the boundary between the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin and eventually delineated the border between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Although Bethel was in the dry hill country, several natural springs supplied water in abundance for its residents.

**Bethel** is first mentioned in the Bible in connection with [Abram](#), who built an altar to God there:

“From there [Abram] went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD” (Genesis 12:8).

After visiting Egypt, Abraham returned to Bethel and offered a sacrifice to God (Genesis 13:3–4).

Originally named **Luz** (Genesis 28:19; Judges 1:23), the city was renamed Bethel by [Jacob](#) after the patriarch experienced a remarkable dream there. While traveling from [Beersheba](#) to Haran to escape his brother Esau, Jacob stopped for the night in Luz. As he slept, he dreamed of a [stairway or ladder](#) that stretched up from earth to heaven. The angels of God were climbing up and down the ladder as God stood at the top (Genesis 28:10–13). The Lord spoke and revealed Himself to Jacob as the God of his fathers. When Jacob awoke, he declared, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:17). Then Jacob set up a sacred pillar, named the place Bethel (Ge 28:18–19), and consecrated the site as a place to worship God (Ge 28:21).

Many years later, Jacob returned to Bethel, built an altar to God there, and called the place El-Bethel, which means “God of Bethel.” Bethel remained one of the main worship centers of Israel. The ark of the covenant was kept at Bethel for a time, and the people often went there to seek God during times of trouble (Judges 20:18–28). The Bible says Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, was buried under an oak tree near Bethel (Genesis 35:8), and the better-known [Deborah](#), judge of Israel, held court at a site between [Ramah](#) and Bethel (Judges 4:5). During the time of the divided kingdoms, [King Jeroboam](#) of Israel established two temples for the northern kingdom, one at Bethel and the other at Dan. In these temples, he set up golden calves (1 Kings 12:26–33). God often sent prophets to preach at Bethel (1 Kings 13:1–10). Many of these prophets pronounced judgment and condemnation on Bethel as a center of idolatry (Amos 3:14; 5:5–6; Hosea 10:15).

On Elijah’s last day of ministry on earth, [he and Elisha](#) encountered a company of prophets at Bethel. These prophets confirmed Elijah’s soon departure: “Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel.’ But Elisha said, ‘As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.’ So they went down to Bethel. The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, ‘Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?’ ‘Yes, I know,’ Elisha replied, ‘so be quiet!’” (2 Kings 2:2–3). Elisha refused to leave Elijah. He was fiercely committed to assuming the older prophet’s mantle and did not want to miss out on the opportunity.

After the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the [Assyrians](#), Bethel remained a home for priests (2 Kings 17:28–41). In the seventh century BC, the high places of Bethel were destroyed by [King Josiah](#) of Judah as part of his religious reforms (2 Kings 23:4, 13–19). Eventually, by the time of Ezra, the city of Bethel had been burned down and reduced to a small village (Ezra 2:28). Bethel is not referred to in the New Testament. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Genesis 13:4 to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.**

- **to:** Ge 13:18 Ge 12:7-8 Ge 35:1-3 Ps 26:8 42:1,2 84:1,2,10
- **called:** Genesis 4:26, Psalm 65:1, Psalm 65:2, Psalm 107:1, Psalm 107:8, Psalm 107:15, Psalm 116:2, Psalm 116:17, Psalm 145:18, Isaiah 58:9, Jeremiah 29:12, Zephaniah 3:9, 1 Corinthians 1:2, Ephesians 6:18, Ephesians 6:19
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Genesis 4:26+ To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. **Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD.**

Genesis 12:7-8 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him 8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis 21:33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there **he called on the name of the LORD, [El Olam: Everlasting God](#)**

Genesis 26:25 So he built an altar there and **called upon the name of the LORD**, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well.





## ABRAM CALLED ON THE NAME OF JEHOVAH

**To the place of the altar which he had made there formerly-** This **altar** refers back to Genesis 12:7-8+ when "The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and **there he built an altar to the LORD** and called upon the name of the LORD." Abram has put the sin of Egypt behind him and is seeking a fresh start.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, Abram's pattern is a great pattern to imitate (read Heb 6:12). We all need a "fresh start" from time to time. God grant each of us the attitude of Paul who wrote "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: **forgetting what lies behind** and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:13-14+) Dear Father, please grant us the empowerment we must have from the Holy Spirit so that we are enabled to press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. In His Mighty Name. Amen.

**And there Abram called on the Name of the LORD**([Jehovah/ Yahweh](#); Lxx = [kurios](#)) - NLT = "there he again worshiped the LORD." **The Name** speaks of all the attributes of God, everything God is, everything that characterizes Him as the Self-existent "I Am."

**Wenham** - "**To call on the name of the LORD**" is used elsewhere in Genesis of the patriarchs Ge 12:8; Ge 13:4; Ge 21:33; Ge 26:25, and it seems to be an umbrella phrase for worship, most obviously prayer and sacrifice. (BORROW [Genesis Commentary](#))

**R Kent Hughes** writes that "Abram worshiped at Bethel's altar. Here again he would offer whole burnt offerings like those of Noah (cf. Ge 8:20), declaring, as the smoke rose upward, that all of his life was God's. It is very important that we take careful notice that the account will end with Abram's building a third altar at Hebron (Ge 13:18), so that the whole story here is clothed in authentic worship. All of Abram's dealings with Lot were an act of worship. Abram's knee remained bent to God. By faith he saw the unseen and acted accordingly. He believed God's word." (BORROW [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#) page 198)

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**LORD** (03068) [Jehovah/ Yahweh](#) The Tetragrammaton YHWH, the Lord, or Yahweh is the personal name of God and the most frequent designation of God in Scripture, occurring 6823 times in the OT. **Jehovah** is God's redemptive, covenant-keeping name, called *the Name* (Lev 24:11,16) and "this glorious and awesome name" (Dt. 28:58). In seven passages the name is particularly stressed (Ex 6:3; Ps 83:18; Isa 12:2; Isa 26:4) or combined with other elements, such as Jehovah Jireh [Genesis 22:14; cf. Exodus 17:15; Judges 6:24; ASV, consistently Jehovah]). To Moses, God revealed the meaning of His personal name "**Yahweh**" by connecting it with the Hebrew phrase *ehyeh*, usually translated "I am," though it is better translated "I will be." In Exodus 3:12 God said, "I will be (*ehyeh*) with you." Then in verse 14 God went on to say, *Ehyeh asher ehyeh*, which can be translated "I am who I am," or, "I will be what I will be." However, *ehyeh* is a Hebrew imperfect which indicates action going on. Thus, it has the meaning: "I will show you who and what I am by who and what I will be to you, for I will be with you." The frequent appearance of this name in relation to God's redemptive work underscores its tremendous importance (Lev. 26:45; Ps. 19:14). Also, it is sometimes compounded with another word to describe the character of the Lord in greater detail (see Gen. 22:14; Ex. 17:15; Jdg. 6:24).

**Jehovah/Yahweh in Genesis** - Gen. 2:4; Gen. 2:5; Gen. 2:7; Gen. 2:8; Gen. 2:9; Gen. 2:15; Gen. 2:16; Gen. 2:18; Gen. 2:19; Gen. 2:21; Gen. 2:22; Gen. 3:1; Gen. 3:8; Gen. 3:9; Gen. 3:13; Gen. 3:14; Gen. 3:21; Gen. 3:22; Gen. 3:23; Gen. 4:1; Gen. 4:3; Gen. 4:4; Gen. 4:6; Gen. 4:9; Gen. 4:13; Gen. 4:15; Gen. 4:16; Gen. 4:26; Gen. 5:29; Gen. 6:3; Gen. 6:5; Gen. 6:6; Gen. 6:7; Gen. 6:8; Gen. 7:1; Gen. 7:5; Gen. 7:16; Gen. 8:20; Gen. 8:21; Gen. 9:26; Gen. 10:9; Gen. 11:5; Gen. 11:6; Gen. 11:8; Gen. 11:9; Gen. 12:1; Gen. 12:4; Gen. 12:7; Gen. 12:8; Gen. 12:17; Gen. 13:4; Gen. 13:10; Gen. 13:13; Gen. 13:14; Gen. 13:18; Gen. 14:22; Gen.

15:1; Gen. 15:2; Gen. 15:4; Gen. 15:6; Gen. 15:7; Gen. 15:8; Gen. 15:18; Gen. 16:2; Gen. 16:5; Gen. 16:7; Gen. 16:9; Gen. 16:10; Gen. 16:11; Gen. 16:13; Gen. 17:1; Gen. 18:1; Gen. 18:13; Gen. 18:14; Gen. 18:17; Gen. 18:19; Gen. 18:20; Gen. 18:22; Gen. 18:26; Gen. 18:33; Gen. 19:13; Gen. 19:14; Gen. 19:16; Gen. 19:24; Gen. 19:27; Gen. 20:18; Gen. 21:1; Gen. 21:33; Gen. 22:11; Gen. 22:14; Gen. 22:15; Gen. 22:16; Gen. 24:1; Gen. 24:3; Gen. 24:7; Gen. 24:12; Gen. 24:21; Gen. 24:26; Gen. 24:27; Gen. 24:31; Gen. 24:35; Gen. 24:40; Gen. 24:42; Gen. 24:44; Gen. 24:48; Gen. 24:50; Gen. 24:51; Gen. 24:52; Gen. 24:56; Gen. 25:21; Gen. 25:22; Gen. 25:23; Gen. 26:2; Gen. 26:12; Gen. 26:22; Gen. 26:24; Gen. 26:25; Gen. 26:28; Gen. 26:29; Gen. 27:7; Gen. 27:20; Gen. 27:27; Gen. 28:13; Gen. 28:16; Gen. 28:21; Gen. 29:31; Gen. 29:32; Gen. 29:33; Gen. 29:35; Gen. 30:24; Gen. 30:27; Gen. 30:30; Gen. 31:3; Gen. 31:49; Gen. 32:9; Gen. 38:7; Gen. 38:10; Gen. 39:2; Gen. 39:3; Gen. 39:5; Gen. 39:21; Gen. 39:23; Gen. 49:18

**CALL ON THE NAME** - This phrase implies participation in a worship setting (cf. Gen. 4:26; 12:8; 21:33; 26:25; Exod. 34:5; Isa. 12:4; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; 7:59; 22:16; Rom. 10:9-13; also note Ps. 50:15; Isa. 55:6; Jer. 33:3). The **name** would represent His person, His character! By calling on Him we acknowledge our need for Him and our desire to be like Him and pleasing to Him. This phrase denotes a desire for fellowship (cf. Isa. 43:1; 45:3,4)!

The NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 150, has a good list related to YHWH's name.

1. 1. it can be praised, Joel 2:26
2. 2. it can be loved, Ps. 5:11
3. 3. it can be declared, Ps. 22:22
4. 4. it can be feared, Mal. 4:2
5. 5. it can be waited on, Ps. 52:9
6. 6. it can be proclaimed, Isa. 12:4
7. 7. it can be walked on, Mic. 4:5
8. 8. it can be blasphemed, Isa. 52:5
9. 9. it can be polluted, Jer. 34:16
10. 10. it can be profaned, Ezek. 36:21-23

God's people can reflect Him positively or negatively, but we do reflect Him (cf. Matt. 5:13-16)!

#### **Genesis 13:5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.**

- tents: Ge 4:20 25:27 Jer 49:29
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### **MOSES NOTE ON LOT'S LOT**

**Now** - This is a time phrase. In this context we do well to see that it immediately follows Abram worshipping the LORD. This mindset prepared Abram for his next "test." He had failed the "famine test" but watch how he does with the "Lot test" after worshipping the LORD!

**THOUGHT** - Is there not a great pattern to seek to pursue (Rhetorical of course)? Abram is about to face another test, but his heart has been prepared and prepped by worship, by focusing on the things above and not the things of the earth (Col 3:1,2+). So how do we imitate his pattern? Do we go in our backyard and build an altar? Of course not, we simply crawl out of our comfortable bed, get on our knees and offer to Him the sacrifice of praise He is due. That's the the uplook that then (at least potentially) will guide our outlook for the remainder of the day. How's your quiet time? Is it "too quiet?" See related resources - [QUIET TIME](#) or longer version [Quiet Time: 7 Minutes With God](#)

**Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents** - NLT = "Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents." Moses gives another parenthetical note similar to Ge 13:2, which sets the scene for the strife that arises in the following passages. Notice what Lot does not have -- an altar! As a consequence, he did not espouse God's best, but as we soon see, he was looking at what he thought was the "world's best" toward Sodom!

[Wiersbe](#) has an interesting analysis of Lot's mindset - Lot had a tent but no altar (Gen. 13:5), which meant he did not call on the Lord for wisdom in making decisions (James 1:5). Instead of lifting up his eyes to heaven, Lot lifted up his eyes to the plain of Jordan (Gen. 13:10) and stopped there. The eyes see what the heart loves. Abraham had taken Lot out of Egypt, but he could not take Egypt out of Lot. Outlook helps to determine outcome. Abraham's eyes were on the Holy City of God (Heb. 11:13–16), and he went on to walk with the Lord and inherit blessing. Lot's eyes were on the sinful cities of men, and he went on to worldly success, spiritual failure, and a shameful end.

**Genesis 13:6 And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.**

- Ge 36:6,7 Ec 5:10,11 Lu 12:17,18 1Ti 6:9
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## ABRAM AND LOT RUN OUT OF ROOM

**And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together** ("living side by side"), **for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together** - There is simply not a lot of room for Lot's possessions and Abram's possessions. Who would have caused them both to be so blessed? That's rhetorical of course, for clearly God had blessed both of them. It would seem that God's goal was to produce a situation in which Abram had to separate from Lot which is of course what transpired.

**Bob Utley** on **the land could not sustain them** - The land in southern Canaan did not get enough annual rainfall to allow the native grasses to flourish. It took many acres to support a flock. Usually April through September was wet enough for grasses to grow, but in October through March the herds had to be moved to higher pastures.

**John Phillips** - Some number of years ago my father was greatly exercised about selling his business and going into full-time service for the Lord. There were some worrying circumstances connected with the proposed change. He asked Stephen Olford for advice. Having listened to the story and weighed the issues, Stephen said: "Len, my advice is simply this—if you don't know what to do, don't do it!" Abram, confronted with worrying circumstances, circumstances that seemed to be clamoring for immediate action, simply waited. He was assured that God would soon make his way clear. So, he did nothing. (BORROW [Exploring Genesis](#))

**Genesis 13:7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.**

- a strife: Ge 21:25 26:20 Ex 2:17 1Co 3:3 Ga 5:20 Tit 3:3 Jas 3:16 4:1
- Canaanite: Ge 10:19 12:6 15:18-21 34:30 Ne 5:9 Php 2:14,15 Col 4:5 1Th 4:12 1Pe 2:12
- dwelled: i.e., They were there when Abram and Lot came to pitch their tents in the land.
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## STRIFE BETWEEN ABRAM AND LOT'S MEN

**And there was strife** ([riyb](#)) **between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock** - Strife is translated in the [Lxx](#) with [mache](#) which can refer to physical combat but in the present context probably is more figuratively, describing "word battles!"

**Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land** - Here is another parenthetical statement by Moses. Why would the Spirit inspire this fact in the present context? Clearly these pagan groups had possessions (including flocks), so that would add even more stress to the competition for the land. Another point to make is that these were pagans watching the strife between believers! What kind of witness did these pagans receive? That's rhetorical of course.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, are you currently experiencing strife with a brother or sister in the Lord? Are the pagans aware of it and watching how you handle the strife? You can rest assured if they know about it, they are watching you like a hawk! They are often looking for any chink in your spiritual armor so that they can be critical of Christianity! What kind of impression will you leave with the watching lost souls who desperately

need Jesus Christ to save them from eternal "strife" (so to speak) in hell? Paul gives us our *modus operandi* to practice before the watching world in this "simple" command "**Do** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) all things without grumbling or disputing; so that (TERM OF PURPOSE) you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,." (Php 2:14-15+) In context, obeying this command to "do all (not some) things" is one way we obey the command to "Work out ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your salvation in fear and trembling." (Php 2:12+). Fortunately, Paul follows that command with a "term of explanation" **for** (explaining how it is **even possible** to continually work out our salvation! The answer is by depending continually on the Holy Spirit, Paul explaining "**FOR** God (His Spirit) is (continually) working in you, (continually) giving you the **desire** to obey Him and the **power** to do what pleases Him." (Php 2:13NLT+). There is simply no other way to "Do all things without grumbling or **disputing** (which is what was at play with the men of Abram and Lot)!"

[Wiersbe](#) adds "When Christians have disputes, it hurts the testimony of the Lord. In my pastoral ministry, I frequently visited the unsaved relatives and friends of church members, seeking to interest them in spiritual things, only to discover that they knew about every "church fight" in town. No wonder our Lord prayed that His people might be one, that the world might believe (John 17:20–23). Christian unity is fragrant and fruitful (Ps. 133), but disunity turns that fragrance into a stench and the garden into a desert."

**NET NOTE** on the **Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling** - This parenthetical clause, introduced with the vav (ו) disjunctive (translated "now"), again provides critical information. It tells in part why the land cannot sustain these two bedouins, and it also hints of the danger of weakening the family by inner strife.

[Warren Wiersbe](#) - Abraham may have failed the first two tests, but he passed this third test with great success. The test was not an easy one, for it involved land and wealth, but Abraham is the example of what every believer should do when there are disputes about material things. Abraham determined to be a peacemaker and not a troublemaker. The problem between Abraham and Lot was not caused by the land, the famine, their wealth (both of them were rich), or even their herdsmen (Ge 13:7). The heart of every problem is the problem in the heart. Lot's heart was centered on wealth and worldly achievement, while Abraham wanted only to please the Lord. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

**Strife** (07379) [riyb](#) from [riyb](#) = to strive or contend) is a masculine noun which means a strife, contention or dispute and in other contexts refers to lawsuits. When [riyb/rib](#) is used with in the context of a legal-judicial setting, usually with God as subject (the "Attorney"). [Riyb](#) is used of conflicts among men (Ge 13:7, Dt 19:17, 21:5, 25:1, Pr 20:3). David uses it of attacks directed at him Ps 55:9).

Riyb - 61 verses - Gen. 13:7; Exod. 17:7; Exod. 23:2; Exod. 23:3; Exod. 23:6; Deut. 1:12; Deut. 17:8; Deut. 19:17; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 25:1; Jdg. 12:2; 1 Sam. 24:15; 1 Sam. 25:39; 2 Sam. 15:2; 2 Sam. 15:4; 2 Sam. 22:44; 2 Chr. 19:8; 2 Chr. 19:10; Job 13:6; Job 29:16; Job 31:13; Job 31:35; Job 33:19; Ps. 18:43; Ps. 31:20; Ps. 35:23; Ps. 43:1; Ps. 55:9; Ps. 74:22; Ps. 119:154; Prov. 15:18; Prov. 17:1; Prov. 17:14; Prov. 18:6; Prov. 18:17; Prov. 20:3; Prov. 22:23; Prov. 23:11; Prov. 25:9; Prov. 26:17; Prov. 26:21; Prov. 30:33; Isa. 1:23; Isa. 34:8; Isa. 41:11; Isa. 41:21; Isa. 58:4; Jer. 11:20; Jer. 15:10; Jer. 20:12; Jer. 25:31; Jer. 50:34; Jer. 51:36; Lam. 3:36; Lam. 3:58; Ezek. 44:24; Hos. 4:1; Hos. 12:2; Mic. 6:2; Mic. 7:9; Hab. 1:3

**Genesis 13:8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.**

- Let: Pr 15:1 Mt 5:9 1Co 6:6,7 Php 2:14 Heb 12:14 Jas 3:17,18
- brethren: Ge 11:27-31 45:24 Ex 2:13 Ps 133:1 Ac 7:26 Ro 12:10 Eph 4:2,3 1Th 4:9 Heb 13:1 1Pe 1:22 2:17 3:8 4:8 2Pe 1:7 1Jn 2:9-11 1Jn 3:14-19 4:7,20,21
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## ABRAM THE PEACEMAKER

**So** - A term of conclusion. Based on the eruption of strife between their herdsmen due to the size of the flocks of Abram and Lot, Abram intervenes.

**Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife**([meribah](#); Lxx - [mache](#) - fighting, quarrels, disputes)(Qal [JUSSIVE](#) ~ like a command) **between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen** - Abram pursues peace which reminds me of Hebrews 12:14 "**Pursue** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) peace with all men, and the sanctification (**HOLINESS**) without which no one will see the Lord."

**For** - Term of explanation. Abram is explaining why there should be no strife and instead pursue peace. As Jesus said "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Mt 5:9+) Indeed, Abram was a "son of God!"

**We are brothers** - **NET** renders it "we are close relatives," for Abram was Lot's uncle. But even more important, they were spiritual brothers. Spiritual brothers should be united in oneness because they worship the same LORD.

**THOUGHT** - Are you currently at strife with a spiritual brother? Then follow the pattern of Abram, and enabled by the Holy Spirit, be willing to lay down your rights for the greater good of the greatest God!

**Strife** ([04808](#))([meribah](#) from [rib](#) = to strive) feminine noun indicating strife, contention. It is used of a state of quarreling or wrangling over something, a condition of hostility (Gen. 13:8; Num. 27:14). [The name Meribah](#) means striving, strife (Num. 27:14; Ps. 95:8; 106:32; Ezek. 47:19; 48:28). This word [meribah](#) is found only in Ge 13:8 and Nu 27:14.

**Genesis 13:9 "Is not the whole land before you? Please [separate](#) from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left."**

- **Is not:** Ge 20:15 34:10
- **if** Ps 120:7 Ro 12:18 1Co 6:7 Heb 12:14 Jas 3:13-18 1Pe 3:8-12
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Hebrews 12:14+ (ABRAHAM OBEYED THIS NT PRINCIPLE) **Pursue** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

### ABRAM PROPOSES A SEPARATION FROM LOT

**Is not the whole land before you? Please [separate](#) from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left."** - Recall that Abram had just recently bowed in worship at the altar, which is another way of saying he surrendered himself to the Lord. In such a mindset, Abram was not prepared to lay down his rights to a weaker brother! What a pattern to imitate!

Abram's proposal is that they would partition the land, but Lot's eyes began to wander (v10)! Abram could have justifiably said "The first call is mine." But he practiced Ro 12:10 and deferred in a spirit of humility and conciliation. And so this righteous man allowed his nephew to decide which area of land he wished to shepherd his flocks.

*It takes more grace than I can tell, to play the second fiddle well.*

-- C H Spurgeon

**THOUGHT** - Abram as the elder had rights but did not insist on them. Do you insist on your rights or do you chose do you take the Jesus approach and "Instead of being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity, each of you should, in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself." (Php 2:3NET+) The only way you can accomplish this is by [depending on the Holy Spirit](#)!

[Wiersbe](#) speaks to this point writing "In his latter years, General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was too infirm to attend the Army's world conference, but he would send the delegates a message. One year he cabled them only one word: OTHERS. I have been privileged to minister with the Salvation Army in different parts of the world, and I can testify that they take that word OTHERS very seriously. "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4+).

[Wiersbe](#) - While in Egypt, Abraham thought first about himself (Gen. 12:12–13), but when he returned to his altar in Canaan, he put

God first and others next....When God is first in your life, it makes no difference who is second or last.

**Constable** - when Abram offered Lot what was on his left he was referring to northern Canaan, the area around Shechem (cf. 12:6; 33:18-34:31; 37:12-17) as far south as Bethel and Ai. The other choice was what was on their right: southern Canaan including Hebron and the Negev (cf. 13:6, 9; 13:1, 18; 20:1; et al.). Both men had previously lived in both regions.

**ILLUSTRATION OF STRIFE** - Two Christian ladies had to share the same office. One always wanted the window open; the other wanted it closed. "I feel I am going to suffocate in here!" said the one. "I'm going to catch my death of cold!" retorted the other. Someone came up with a suggestion. "Why don't you keep the window closed until one of you dies of suffocation and then keep it open until the other dies of pneumonia," he said. "Then we'll have some peace around here!"

**Genesis 13:10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.**

- **and saw** : Ge 3:6 6:2 Nu 32:1-42 1Jn 2:15-16
- **all the valley of the Jordan**: Ge 19:17,24,25 De 34:3 1Ki 7:46 Ps 107:34 1Jn 2:15
- **well watered everywhere**: Ge 2:9,10 Isa 51:3 Eze 28:13 31:8 Joe 2:3
- **Zoar**: Ge 14:2,8 19:20,22-30 De 34:3 Isa 15:5 Jer 48:34 Instead of "Zoar," which was situated at the extremity of the plain of Jordan.
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 John 2:15-16 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

### LOT LIFTS EYES BUT NOT HIGH ENOUGH!

**Lot lifted up his eyes** Lifting up his eyes would have been good if had continued lifting them upward looking past the earthly to the heavenly (from the temporal to the eternal, the seen to the unseen, from passing pleasures to permanent paradise) (cp Col 3:1-2 Ro 8:25 1Pe 1:13 Heb 11:25,27). There's a lot of Lot in a lot of modern day believers in America! (and Lot was a legitimate OT believer ~ righteous 2Pe 2:7-8).

**NET NOTE** on **lifted...saw** - The expression draws attention to the act of looking, indicating that Lot took a good look. It also calls attention to the importance of what was seen.

**and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere**—Lot thought the pagan land looked better than the Promised Land! Lot's lust to inhabit the lush Jordan valley exposed him to the lascivious wickedness of Sodom (Ge 19:1-25). Looks can be deceiving especially with the fallen flesh is causing the tempting look (as it clearly was in Lot)!

At least as early as the time of Joshua, most of the Jordan valley was desolate, utterly unlike the description in this verse. Yet the destructive critics have thought that this story originated in the time of the later Israelite kingdom. Archaeological research has now proved that the Jordan valley was filled with populous cities for many centuries, but that most of these had disappeared by the time of Joshua. The spade of the archaeologist has served again and again to confirm the Scriptures, not to deny them.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Covetousness—an insatiable appetite for more things—leads to all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). In order to get more money, people will lie (Prov. 21:6), mistreat people (Pr 22:16), cheat (Pr 28:8), and even trouble their own families (Pr 15:27). "Covetousness is both the beginning and the end of the devil's alphabet," wrote Robert South, "the first vice in corrupt nature that moves, and the last which dies." His (LOT'S) heart was really in Egypt (Gen. 13:10).

**Bob Utley** - Rashi (a rabbi of the Middle Ages) says the land had trees like Eden and vegetables like Egypt. The irony is that as Eden was a place of judgment, so too, the Jordan Valley!

**This was before the LORD (Jehovah/ Yahweh; Lxx = [theos](#)) destroyed ([shachath](#)) Sodom and Gomorrah** – NET, NIV and ESV put this phrase in parenthesis. Moses gives us a preview of "coming attractions," and the fate of Lot's bad choice! The Septuagint translates **destroyed** ([shachath](#)) with the verb katastrepho which means to completely overturn which is what God did to Sodom and



Gomorrah. It is no surprise that the same Hebrew verb describes the pre-flood world as **corrupt** ([shachath](#) - Ge 6:11, 12+) which caused God to **destroy** the world (also [shachath](#) Ge 6:17; Ge 9:11,15+) with a flood. It is notable that both the flood and Sodom were obliterated by a divine catastrophe and only one family survived in each situation (Noah and Lot)!

**Like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar** - The Valley of the Jordan was verdant and fertile and caught Job's eye, when he should have been looking toward God with the eyes of his heart. He had gone to Egypt with Abram in Genesis 12 and experienced a taste of the "good life," which colored his thinking and directed his choice of land!

**John Phillips** is correct when he says "A man who is weak in his devotions and worldly in his desires will inevitably be wrong in his decisions."

**NET NOTE** makes a great point commenting that "The narrative places emphasis on what Lot saw so that the reader can appreciate how it aroused his desire for the best land. It makes allusion to the garden of the LORD and to the land of Egypt for comparison. Just as the tree in the garden of Eden had awakened Eve's desire, so the fertile valley attracted Lot. And just as certain memories of Egypt would cause the Israelites to want to turn back and abandon the trek to the promised land, so Lot headed for the good life.

**Bob Utley** - Zoar is one city located in the Jordan Valley (cf. Ge 13:10), just south of the Dead Sea. The account of its name is found in Gen. 19:20-22, which is a word play on "small". It was an oasis (cf. Josephus, Jewish Wars 4.8.4). There are several cities located in this area: (1) Sodom; (2) Gomorrah; (3) Admah; (4) Zeboiim; and (5) Zoar/Bela. They were collectively called "the cities of the plain." All but Zoar were destroyed by God (cf. Deut. 29:23).

**Like the land of Egypt** would prove to be a significant temptation to Israel even after they had been liberated from harsh Egyptian bondage (Oh, how easily and quickly they/we forget!)

Exodus 16:3 The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand **in the land of Egypt**, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Numbers 11:5 "We remember the fish which **we used to eat free in Egypt**, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,

Numbers 14:2-3 All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died **in the land of Egypt!** Or would that we had died in this wilderness! 3 "Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; **would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"**

**THOUGHT** - Do we lift our eyes and see sites "**like the land of Egypt**," which tempt us to return to the former bondage to sin, from which we have been liberated by crucifixion with Christ. Romans 6:6+ says "knowing this, that our old self (man) was crucified with Him (Christ), in order that our body of sin might be done away with (made ineffective), so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." Why would we ever want to go back to this harsh taskmaster which gives only corrupt wages?

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**Destroyed** (07843) [shachath](#) means to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt, to destroy (Sodom and Gomorrah = Ge 13:10, Ge 18:28, 31-32), to lay waste (Egypt from swarms of flies - Ex 8:24). **Shachath** is used of Israelites who worshiped the golden calf (Ex 32:7; Dt 9:12; 32:5, Hos 9:9). God warned He would **destroy** Israel if they were turned away from following Him (Nu 32:15). **Shachath** describes Israel's behavior as more corrupt after a judge died (Jdg 2:19).

**Shachath** in the **Pentateuch** - Gen. 6:11; Gen. 6:12; Gen. 6:13; Gen. 6:17; Gen. 9:11; Gen. 9:15; Gen. 13:10; Gen. 18:28; Gen. 18:31; Gen. 18:32; Gen. 19:13; Gen. 19:14; Gen. 19:29; Gen. 38:9; Exod. 8:24; Exod. 12:13; Exod. 12:23; Exod. 21:26; Exod. 32:7; Lev. 19:27; Num. 32:15; Deut. 4:16; Deut. 4:25; Deut. 4:31; Deut. 9:12; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 10:10; Deut. 20:19; Deut. 20:20; Deut. 31:29; Deut. 32:5

**Katastrepho** (2690)(3x in NT - Mt 21:12, Mk 11:15, Acts 15:16) means to cause to be overturned, turn upside down, upset, overturn something like the money-changers' tables (Mt 21:12; Mk 11:15). It means to cause something to be in total disarray and so to destroy or ruin (Acts 15:16). To turn over, turn under: the soil with a plow. Used in Septuagint of Sodom and Gomorrah - Ge 13:10, Ge 19:21, Ge 25:29, Ge 29:22.

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**Rod Mattoon** - Like salt on ice, greed ate away at the character of Lot. It became a consuming passion in his life and led to his decision in the choosing the plains of Jordan. Greed says, "I can satisfy you and make you happy!" Later, we only find disappointment with greed's promises. Greed's icy fingers clutch like vulture claws at the hearts of others throughout Genesis.

- Greed in Wealth—Lot wanted the best land and Jacob wanted the birthright. Ge 13:10; 25:31
- Greed for Wells—Gerar's herdsmen are greedy for the wells of Isaac. Ge 26:20
- Greed in Wages—Laban removes all sheep of Jacob's description which were to be his wages. Ge 30:35
- Greed in Worship—Rachel steals Laban's images. Ge 31:19
- Greed for Wares—The men of Shechem are greedy for the wares of Jacob's people. Ge 34:23
- Greed for Winnings or profits—Judah suggests selling Joseph as a slave. Ge 37:27 (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis - [hardbound copies are scarce](#) - [here is the very affordable digital version](#) - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc)

**Genesis 13:11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.**

- **chose:** Ge 19:17
- **they:** Ge 13:9,14 Ps 16:3 119:63 Pr 27:10 Heb 10:25 1Pe 2:17
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### LOT CHOOSES AND SEPARATES

**So** - Term of conclusion. Based on what Lot's eyes saw, he made his decision, one that would radically change his life. What should he have done? Given that we know men like Abram called on the Name of the LORD, it would have been wise for Lot to have done likewise. There is no evidence that this righteous man (2Pe 2:7+) sought the Righteous One (Isaiah 53:11+) in this crucial decision.

**THOUGHT** - Dear brother or sister in Christ, are you looking longingly (even lustfully) at some "lush valley" (so to speak), a new job, a new wife, a new husband, etc, etc? Dearly beloved, before you make the mistake Lot made by moving forward based on what his eyes saw, you would be wise to consult with the One Who knows the Beginning from the End (and everything in between)! You might just save yourself from some "brimstone and fire" (so to speak) in your life (cf Ge 19:24)!

*In any given situation, what you are determines what you see,  
and what you see determines what you do.*

-- Haddon Robinson

**Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward**- Instead of staying in the promised land moving either to the north or south, effectively splitting the territory with Abram, Lot fell prey to the lust of his flesh and journeyed eastward toward the region of the Dead Sea.

**Wiersbe** - Lot looked toward Sodom (Gen. 13:10); then he moved toward Sodom (Ge 13:11–12); and finally, he moved into Sodom (Ge 14:12). Instead of being a pilgrim who made progress, Lot regressed into the world and away from God's blessing (Ps. 1:1). He "journeyed east" (Ge 13:11) and turned his back on Bethel ("house of God") and toward Ai ("ruins"; see Ge 12:8).

**Thus they separated from each other** - This final physical separation from Abram would have spiritual consequences in the life of Lot.

**THOUGHT**- Separation from a godly influence (a godly leader, a godly church, etc) will invariably reap a harvest of negative consequences, if we refuse to repent and return.

**Rod Mattoon** - Lot reveals his selfish nature as he fails to honor Abram by going ahead and taking first pick of the land. His decision to go to the plains of Jordan reveals his desire for satisfaction instead of the safety of his family. How fooled we are in thinking if we get our own way we will be happy. Some of the most miserable people I have met are selfish people who have gotten their own way. They are miserable because what they thought would make them happy did not. They are left empty and miserable. (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis - [hardbound copies are scarce](#) - [here is the very affordable digital version](#) - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc)

**Genesis 13:12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.**

- **Lot dwelled:** Ge 19:29
- **moved his tents:** Ge 14:12 19:1 Ps 26:5 1Co 15:33 2Pe 2:7,8
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## SETTLEMENTS CONTRASTED

**Abram settled in the land of Canaan**- Indeed was this not exactly where God had called him to settle when He called him out of Ur of the Chaldees (cf Ge 11:31+)? The answer is "yes."

**while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom**- The verb **settled** (yashab, Lxx = katoikeo = to settle down) sit, to dwell, to inhabit, to endure, to stay and can convey the thought of remaining (a permanent settler, not a sojourner). Lot moved his whole family into the land of the cesspool called Sodom and eventually became a citizen.

**MacDonald** on Lot's lot - Though a true believer (2 Pet. 2:7, 8+), Lot was a world-borderer. As someone has said, "he got grass for his cattle while Abram got grace for his children" (Ge 13:15, 16+). (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Genesis 13:13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.**

- But the: Ge 15:16 18:20 19:4-11 1Sa 15:18 Isa 1:9 3:9 Eze 16:46-50 Mt 9:10,13 11:23,24 Joh 9:24,31 Ro 1:27 2Pe 2:6-8,10 Jude 1:7
- before: Ge 6:11 10:9 38:7 2Ki 21:6 Isa 3:8 Jer 23:24 Heb 4:13
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## LOT DOES NOT DEFER DWELLING IN THE DESPICABLE DEPRAVITY OF SODOMITES

**Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD** ([Jehovah/ Yahweh](#); Lxx = [theos](#)) - Oh, if only Lot could have read this passage before he made his choice! Moses gives us another parenthetical fact which will help understand the events that unfold in Genesis 19. Here we see a vivid description of Sodom's exceeding wickedness which is exemplified in Genesis 19:4-14 when the men even sought the angels (the Sodomites thought the angels were men) that visited Lot so that they might "have relations with them!" (Ge 19:5). Ge 19:1 even suggests Lot because a local official in Sodom! Now that's a picture of despicable depravity! Clearly they had rejected natural revelation of God and He had given them "over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them," for "the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." (Ro 1:27+)

Note the phrase **against the LORD**. All sin is **against the LORD** (contrast Joseph's mindset with Lot's mindset - Ge 39:9), but these men went above and beyond the call of normal sin and took their heinous acts of sin to a new level (or better stated "a new depth") of depravity!

**NET NOTE** on Hebrew "**wicked and sinners against the LORD exceedingly.**" The description of the sinfulness of the Sodomites is very emphatic. First, two nouns are used to form a hendiadys: "wicked and sinners" means "wicked sinners," the first word becoming adjectival. The text is saying these were no ordinary sinners; they were wicked sinners, the type that cause pain for others. Then to this phrase is added "**against the LORD,**" stressing their violation of the laws of heaven and their culpability. Finally, to this is added מְאֹד (mé'od, "exceedingly," translated here as "extremely").

**John Phillips** - Sainly old George Mueller used to say that the stops as well as the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord. Abram was wonderfully restrained by God from choosing the Jordan valley. God was about to destroy the cities of the plain in fire and brimstone in one dreadful night of fear and flame. We say, "But Lot did not know that!" That is the very point, for neither did Abram. But God did, and because Abram kept in touch with God he was divinely restrained from making the wrong choice. (BORROW [Exploring Genesis](#))

**Genesis 13:14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now **lift up** your eyes and **look** from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;**

- **had separated from:** Ge 13:11
- **Lift:** Ge 13:10 Isa 49:18 60:4
- **northward:** Ge 28:14 De 3:27
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## LORD COMMANDS ABRAM TO LOOK ALL DIRECTIONS

In Genesis 13:14-18 God confirms His promise to Abram. In short, Abram's faith was rewarded.

**The LORD** ([Jehovah/ Yahweh](#); Lxx = [theos](#)) **said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward** - Notice that God does not come on the scene until Lot has separated. In Ge 13:10 Lot had lifted his eyes and chosen, but now God in essence tells Abram to lift his eyes and see what God had chosen for him! Here we see God reassure Abram regarding the covenant He had made with him in Genesis 12:1-3+ and Ge 12:7+. And it was exceeding abundantly beyond all Abram could ask or think! (cf Eph 3:20+). Why do I say that? Think about where God tells Abram to look. This would include the verdant well watered valley of the Jordan! That is the land **eastward** where Lot had settled! And yet it had been promised by God to Abram (Ge 12:7+). Lot had selfishly sought it, but here God clearly says He will overrule Lot's willful choice in favor of Abram, ultimately because His covenant with Abram was immutable and everlasting (Ge 13:15).

One is reminded of the words of Jesus to those who chose to follow her (and lose their life - Mk 8:34,35) Who promised that "everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life." (Mt 19:29).

Lot's descendants would not inherit land in the promised land but his sons Moab and Ben-ammi (Ge 19:37-38) would become the founders of Moab and Ammon, nations east of the promised land.

**Wenstrom** writes that "The phrase *"Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward"* reflected a legal practice in the days of Abram of transferring property rights by sight and intention. The Lord invited Moses to do the same in Deuteronomy 34:1-4 before he died and Joshua led Israel into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In both instances, with Moses in Deuteronomy 34:1-4 and Abram in Genesis 13:14-17, the divine invitation to view the land is given to confirm the promise even though they both did not participate in the dispossessing of the Canaanites. Both Abram and Moses did "not" receive the promise but they will receive it in their resurrection bodies during the millennial reign of Christ." ([Genesis Verse by Verse](#))

In Ge 13:10 it was Lot who lifted up his eyes to look, but here it is Jehovah telling Abram to lift up his eyes and look. Lot's look was motivated by flesh and not in the will of God, while Abram's is motivated by a desire to do the will of God and please Him with obedience.

*Lot was living for the possible,  
but Abraham was trusting God for the impossible.*  
--Warren Wiersbe

**Bob Utley** - Abram moved by revelation ("lift up your eyes," *Qa/ IMPERATIVE*; "look," , *Qa/ IMPERATIVE*); Lot by self-interest (cf. Gen. 13:10).

**NET NOTE** The repetition of the expression (Heb "lift up the eyes") here underscores how the LORD will have the last word and actually do for Abram what Abram did for Lot—give him the land. It seems to be one of the ways that God rewards faith.

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**G Campbell Morgan** - Gen. 13.14. These words were spoken to Abram when he was in a place of peculiar difficulty. He was now in the land to which he had been sent by God. Moreover he was there after a deflection from the pathway of faith, in which deflection he had gone down into Egypt. An hour had come when domestic difficulties had arisen between him and his kinsman, Lot. It had become necessary for them to separate from each other. With the magnanimity of a great soul, Abram had given to Lot the right to choose the place where he would dwell in the land, and Lot had chosen. The result was that Abram, on that level of human arrangement, was excluded from the best of the country. It was at this juncture that God communed with him, and gave him this command. The words are seen in their true suggestiveness when they are put into contrast with those found in the tenth verse, "Lot lifted up his eyes." In doing so, Lot had chosen upon the ground of personal advantage. When he had gone, God said to the man who had chosen not to choose, "Lift up now thine eyes," and directed him to look "northward and southward and eastward and westward"; that- was to every point of the compass and consequently over all the land, including that which Lot had chosen for

himself. All he thus looked upon was then secured to him by the covenant of God. The teaching of the story is patent. Man has no final rights in any possessions other than those which are his by the gift of God. The man who, by faith, leaves the choices of his life to God, is the man who finds his way into possessions of which he cannot be robbed.

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**F B Meyer - Genesis 13:14 The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him.**

Abram's life was one of an ever-perfecting separation. But out of these experiences sprang his rarest joys. The separate and obedient soul may reckon on:—

**Fresh Revelation.** — Whenever Abram dared to step out in obedience, the Lord spake freshly to him. But in Egypt we find no trace of the Divine voice. If God spake there, it would be in warning and rebuke. Has the voice of God long been silent to thee — no fresh command, no deeper insight into truth? See to it that thou art not in Egypt. Separate thyself, not only from Haran, but from Lot; not only from what is clearly wrong, but from all that is questionable; and the Lord will speak to thee things it is not possible for man to utter.

**Further Vision.** — Lot lifted up his eyes to espy what would make for his advantage and well-being, and beheld only the plain of Sodom, which indeed was well-watered, but the seat of exceeding sin. But when Abram lifted up his eyes, not to search out aught for himself, but to see what God had prepared, he looked northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward — words which remind us of the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ. The single eye is full of light; the far climber gets the widest horizon; if thou wilt do his will, thou shalt know.

**Hundredfold Compensation.** — Whatever Abram renounced, when he left his home, or gave Lot the right to choose, he received back in the usual measure of God, with an overflowing over plus. God gave him the entire land, including Lot's portion. We can never give up for God, without receiving in this life more than we gave.

CONTRAST BETWEEN ABRAM AND LOT	
ABRAM	LOT
Walked by faith	Walked by sight
Generous	Greedy
Spiritual desires	Worldly desires
Looked for a city built by God	Looked for a city built by man and destroyed by God.
Heir to the world	Lost everything
Man of aspiration	Man of ambition
Covets righteousness	Covets success
Source: Rod Mattoon - (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis - <a href="#">hardbound copies are scarce</a> - <a href="#">here is the very affordable digital version</a> - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc)	

**THOUGHT** - The chart is a nice contrast of two men, but it begs a question or response from each of us **In which column would you place yourself?**

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**Genesis 13:15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.**

- Ge 12:7 15:18 17:7,8 18:18 24:7 26:3,4 28:4,13 35:12 48:4 Ex 33:1 Nu 34:2,12-29 De 26:2-4 34:4 2Ch 20:7 Ne 9:7,8 Ps 37:22,29 Ps 105:9-12 112:1,2 Isa 63:18 Mt 5:5 Ac 7:5
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Genesis 12:2 And **I will make you a great nation**, And **I will bless you**, And **make your name great**; And so you shall be a blessing;

Genesis 12:7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "**To your descendants I will give this land.**" So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

## **JEHOVAH'S GIFT OF LAND TO ABRAM'S SEED FOREVER**

**for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants**([zera](#); Lxx = [sperma](#)) **forever** (NLT = as a permanent possession) - This was the LORD's third appearance to Abram (Ge 12:2, Ge 12:7) and the second time Yahweh makes the promise of the land but now adds "**forever**." So not only would Abram receive the promised land but all his offspring would receive it forever.

**Wenstrom on all the land which you see** - The phrase "all the land which you see" is a reference to the land of Canaan, which is tract of land, which covers all Palestine west of the Jordan (Num 34:2-12) and whose western border is the Mediterranean Sea. The natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. "**Your descendants**" refers to regenerate Israel and does "not" refer to the Arabs nor the church since only regenerate Israel was promised the land of Canaan. The land grant was a gift and could not be purchased since the Lord is the Creator and Possessor heaven and earth (cf Ps 115:15-16, Ge 14:19) ([Genesis Verse by Verse](#)) Wenstrom repeats that "**Your descendants**" refers to Abram's "national" posterity (Gen. 18:18), which is regenerate (born again) Israel that would originate from Abram and Sarah's son Isaac and Isaac's son Jacob and does "not" refer to the Arabs nor the church since only regenerate Israel (**ED: NOT EVERYONE WOULD AGREE WITH THIS INTERPRETATION WHICH HE MENTIONS TWICE**) was promised the land of Canaan."

[Wiersbe](#) - Lot had lifted up his eyes and seen what the world had to offer; now God invited Abraham to lift up his eyes and see what heaven had to offer. Lot chose a piece of land which he finally lost, but God gave Abraham the whole land which still belongs to him and his descendants. Lot had said, "I will take." God said to Abraham, "I will give." What a contrast! Lot lost his family, but Abraham was promised a family so large it could not be counted. (Remember, Abraham and Sarah were old and had no children.) Lot was living for the possible, but Abraham was trusting God for the impossible.

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### **QUESTION - [What is the land that God promised to Israel?](#)**

**ANSWER** - There is probably no more disputed real estate on earth than the land of Israel. Even calling it "Israel" will raise objections from some quarters. The Jewish people lay claim to the land because they first held possession of it millennia ago and because God directly gave them the land, as recorded in the Bible.

In Genesis 12:7, God promises Abram, who had just arrived in Canaan, "To your offspring I will give this land." Later, in Genesis 15:18, God expands on that unconditional promise: "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates" (NASB). Then, in Genesis 17:8, God reiterates the promise to Abraham, adding that the land gift is irrevocable: "The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you." God later repeats the promise to Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26:3-4) and Isaac's son Jacob (Genesis 28:13), whose name God later changed to Israel.

In the [Abrahamic Covenant](#), then, God laid out the extent of the land that would belong to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—a territory including all of Canaan and stretching from Egypt to modern-day Iraq. Several centuries later, when it came time for the Israelites actually take possession of the [Promised Land](#), God again spoke of a vast area "from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites" (Joshua 1:4, NLT).

**The promise of land belonging to the children of Israel is [permanent](#). Even when Israel was expelled from their land, which has happened twice in history, God promised they would return:**

"Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it" (Deuteronomy 30:4-5+).

This promise is part of what is today sometimes called the [Palestinian Covenant](#) or the Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 29:1-30:10+).

In foretelling the removal of Israel from their land, the Palestinian Covenant anticipated the [Babylonian Captivity](#) (586 BC) and the



Roman destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70). In both cases, the promise of the covenant held true: the Jews regained their land and their nation in 537 BC and again in AD 1948. Israel is still in their land, despite the fact that their conquerors, Babylon and Rome, are long gone. **All of this reinforces the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that God would establish Israel in their land as His chosen people** (Deuteronomy 29:13). The Land Covenant also contains some special promises to Israel that many believe will not be completely fulfilled until the millennial reign of Christ.

According to Genesis 15:18 and Joshua 1:4, the land God gave to Israel included everything from the Nile River in Egypt to Lebanon (south to north) and everything from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (west to east). On today's map, the land God has stated belongs to Israel includes everything modern-day Israel possesses, plus all of the territory occupied by the Palestinians (the West Bank and Gaza), plus some of Egypt and Syria, plus all of Jordan, plus some of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Thus, Israel currently possesses only a fraction of the land God has promised; the rest of their inheritance likely awaits the return of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. God has given His word that the nation of Israel will never cease as long as the sun still shines by day and the moon and stars still shine by night (Jeremiah 31:35–37). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### **QUESTION - [Did God give Israel the Promised Land for all time \(Deuteronomy 4:40\)?](#)**

**ANSWER** - In Deuteronomy 4:40 the Lord gave the Israelites this command: “Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time.” Does this mean God gave Israel the [Promised Land](#) in perpetuity?

This passage contains a conditional offer. Israel would have the Promised Land as they kept God's “decrees and commands.” The Israelites had to obey God's statutes in order to remain in the land. History reveals that the Israelites often disobeyed, resulting in temporary times of exile from their land.

However, the end of this passage notes that God is giving Israel the Promised Land “for all time.” The Hebrew phrase translated “for all time” is a general statement, likely in reference to God's original promise of a land to Abraham in Genesis 12.

There are both a conditional and unconditional aspect to God's promise. God offered blessings within the Promised Land *conditionally*, related to the Israelites' obedience. Yet God also made an *unconditional* vow that Israel would have the Promised Land “for all time.”

How long is “for all time”? In the book of Revelation, we see Israel as a central focus. In the end times, Israel faces many difficulties, yet that tribulation concludes with the Messiah reigning from His throne in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. The book concludes with a new heaven, new earth, and [new Jerusalem](#). The promise of Deuteronomy 4:40 is a far-seeing promise, extending to the end of this world's existence and even into the time of the new earth.

Many other passages of Scripture support the fact that Israel will possess the Promised Land forever. For example, God spoke to Isaac in Genesis 26:3, saying, “Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.” The Lord also spoke to Jacob in Genesis 28:13–14 with similar words: “There above it stood the Lord, and he said: ‘I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.’” See also Psalm 132:14; Isaiah 14:1; and Zechariah 2:3–5, 10–13.

Some have suggested that, because of God's promises to Israel concerning the Promised Land, Christians should support the modern nation of Israel without reservation. Christians have many reasons to support the people of Israel, but this does not mean Christians must agree with every political decision made by the modern Israeli government. Instead, the focus is on God's spiritual restoration of Israel (Romans 11:26) and the enduring promise to His chosen people. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Genesis 13:16 “I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.”**

- Ge 12:2,3 15:5 17:6,16,20 18:18 21:13 22:17 25:1-34 26:4 28:3,14 Ge 32:12 35:11 36:1-43 46:3 Ex 1:7 32:13 Nu 23:10 De 1:10 Judges 6:3,5 1Ki 3:8 4:20 1Ch 21:5 27:23 2Ch 17:14-18 Isa 48:18 Isa 48:19 Jer 33:22 Ro 4:16-18 Heb 11:12 Rev 7:9
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**YAHWEH'S PROMISE OF  
UNCOUNTABLE DESCENDANTS**

**I will make your descendants** ([zera](#); Lxx = [sperma](#)) **as the dust of the earth** - Note the two divine promises were (1) land and (2) descendants. Abram means "exalted father," but at the time of this promise he had no offspring. Note that the Hebrew descendants (in both uses in this verse) is masculine singular and is translated in the Septuagint (Lxx) with [sperma](#) in the singular. **Dust** is one of three similes God uses to describe Abram's descendants as innumerable, the other two terms of comparison being the **stars** in Ge 15:5 and the **sand** of the seashore in Ge 22:17.

**Bob Utley** - Here again is the metaphorical promise (cf. Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:14; Exod. 32:13; Num. 23:10) of a son, a family, a tribe, and a great nation (YHWH also promises to bless Ishmael, cf. Gen. 16:10; 17:20). The promise is not to be through Lot; he is gone! Abram believes this promise (cf. Gen. 15:6) and Paul uses this as the basis for his justification by grace through faith in Rom. 4:3 and Gal. 3:6.

**So that** (purpose clause) **if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants** ([zera](#); Lxx = [sperma](#)) **can also be numbered** 0 The point is that they could not be numbered. Put yourself in Abram's sandals for just a moment. How many children does he have at this time? Zero! From zero to innumerable with a barren wife (Ge 11:30) is utterly impossible! Unless the One making the promise is the "non-lying" God! Note that Abram does not say "I'm too old (he was more than 75 at the time - I am 77 and would have said "I'm too old!")" OR "But God, Sarai is barren." OR "But God, I am childless." There is no record of Abram disputing or questioning God. In fact, in Ge 13:17-18 Abram obeys God's commands indicating that he clearly believed God was able to accomplish the impossible!

**Henry Morris** - It would be as impossible now to count Abraham's descendants as to count the dust of the earth. He was the progenitor of all the Israelites, of course, but also of all the Arab nations, as well as the peoples of many now-extinct nations—Edomites, Midianites, etc.

**John Phillips** gives an illustration of what happens when God blesses a man like He did Abram - Reading the book of Romans changed the life of Martin Luther. Reading Luther's preface to his commentary on Romans transformed the life of John Wesley. Attending a chapel of the Primitive Methodists, one of the groups following the teachings of John Wesley, led to the conversion of C. H. Spurgeon. Spurgeon touched the life of young Henry Morehouse, who in turn transformed the ministry of D. L. Moody. Attending one of Moody's meetings transformed the life of C. T. Studd and six others who became known as the Cambridge Seven. They in turn swept across the universities of England and Scotland, stirring students everywhere to lives of devotion and service for God overseas. That is spiritual posterity. That is the kind of spiritual chain reaction that results when God blesses a man. ([BORROW Exploring Genesis](#))

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**Descendants** (seed, offspring) ([02233](#)) [zera](#) from [zara](#) = to sow, scatter seed) means a sowing, seed, offspring. A masculine noun meaning sowing, seed, descendants, offspring, children, and posterity. The literal use of the word indicates seed of the field (i.e., seed planted in the field). The first use in the Bible refers to literal seed (Ge 1:11, 29). In Ge 3:15+ "**seed**" refers to the offspring of the devil and the offspring of the woman. Seed meaning descendants is common in Genesis (Ge 4:25, 9:9, 12:7, etc) and especially in the context of covenant. The most important seed Moses describes is the seed of Abraham, the promised seed, referring to Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons (Ge 12:7; Ge 15:3) and ultimately foreshadows the seed of the Messiah (cf Gal 3:16+). The author of Genesis uses the word twenty-one times in this setting (Ex. 32:13; Dt. 1:8).

**Zera in Genesis** - Gen. 1:11; Gen. 1:12; Gen. 1:29; Gen. 3:15; Gen. 4:25; Gen. 7:3; Gen. 8:22; Gen. 9:9; Gen. 12:7; Gen. 13:15; Gen. 13:16; Gen. 15:3; Gen. 15:5; Gen. 15:13; Gen. 15:18; Gen. 16:10; Gen. 17:7; Gen. 17:8; Gen. 17:9; Gen. 17:10; Gen. 17:12; Gen. 17:19; Gen. 19:32; Gen. 19:34; Gen. 21:12; Gen. 21:13; Gen. 22:17; Gen. 22:18; Gen. 24:7; Gen. 24:60; Gen. 26:3; Gen. 26:4; Gen. 26:24; Gen. 28:4; Gen. 28:13; Gen. 28:14; Gen. 32:12; Gen. 35:12; Gen. 38:8; Gen. 38:9; Gen. 46:6; Gen. 46:7; Gen. 47:19; Gen. 47:23; Gen. 47:24; Gen. 48:4; Gen. 48:11; Gen. 48:19

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**Bob Utley** - God used several metaphors with which Abraham would be familiar to describe the abundance of his descendants.

1. dust – Gen. 13:16; 28:14; Num. 23:10
2. stars – Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4
3. sand – Gen. 22:17; 32:12

In Genesis Abraham receives many promises from YHWH.

1. land – Gen. 12:1-2; 13:14-15; 15:7,18; 17:8
2. seed/descendants – Gen. 12:2; 13:16; 15:5,18; 17:2,4-7,16,19; 22:17
3. covenant – Gen. 17:7,19,21

4. special blessing of all nations through him – Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14

**Genesis 13:17 “Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.”**

- Joshua 18:8
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 17:8 **“I will give to you** and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 26:3 “Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants **I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.**”

Genesis 50:24 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to **the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.**”

Leviticus 14:34 “When you enter the land of Canaan, **which I give you for a possession**, and I put a mark of leprosy on a house in the land of your possession,

2 Kings 13:23 But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them and turned to them **because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, and would not destroy them or cast them from His presence until now.

Joshua 1:1-3+ Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ servant, saying, 2 “Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. 3 **“Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you,** just as I spoke to Moses.

Deuteronomy 11:24+ **“Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours;** your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea.

### GOD COMMAND ABRAM TO ARISE AND WALK

**Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth** - As you think about this command and God's promise, remember that at that time this land was in the hands of the Canaanites, which means that Abram will need to walk by faith, not by sight! (2Co 5:7+). God commands Abram to lay claim to the promised land now possessed by pagans! This is an authentic "name it, claim it!" Yes he was to walk out physically, but to reiterate, he was walking out in faith, for faith that is real, faith that God blesses, is faith that obeys God's commands, God's words! By faith Abram claimed the promised inheritance ([See related passages above](#) of walking out in faith). In the ancient world when an army won a victory they would lay claim to the territory by walking through the land.

One of the best commentaries on this verse is Hebrews 11:1: "Faith gives substance to our hopes and convinces us of realities we do not see" (REB).

**Bruce K. Waltke** adds that “Kings asserted their right to rule their territory by symbolically tracing out its boundaries. In Egypt (from ca. 3000 B.C.), on the day of his enthronement, the new Pharaoh circumambulated the fortified wall in a festal procession known as the ‘circuit of the wall.’ The Hittite king (ca. 1300 B.C.) toured his realm at the annual winter festival of Nun-ta-ri-ya-shas. In a poem of Ugarit (on the coast of Syria about 1400 B.C.), Baal made rounds of ‘seventy-seven towns, eighty-eight cities’ in order to assert his new kingship over gods and humans. Similarly, the priests within Joshua’s army carried the Lord’s throne around the walls of Jericho for seven days presumably to stake out their claim (Josh. 6). Sarna notes, ‘Early Jewish exegetes (Targ. Jon.) understood this traversing of the length and breadth of the land to be a symbolic act constituting a mode of legal acquisition termed hazakah in rabbinic Hebrew’” (BORROW [Genesis. A Commentary](#) page 222).

**NET NOTE** on **walk about** - The [Hitpael](#) form הִתְהַלֵּךְ (hithallekh) means “to walk about”; it also can carry the ideas of moving about, traversing, going back and forth, or living in an area. It here has the connotation of traversing the land to survey it, to look it over.

**For** (term of explanation) - God gives Abram a precious promise to encourage him to obey the commands He had just given him.

**I will give it to you** - God promises to give the land for the third time (Ge 12:7, Ge 13:15). It is a grace promise and was not something Abram merited or earned. Of course, it did not mean that Abram could just "Let go and let God." No, Abram still had to obey to lay hold of the promises, even as we today must obey (enabled by His Spirit) to lay hold of promises like "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." (2Pe 1:3) We experience His divine power when we walk in the Spirit and obey His Word ( "Let God and let's go.")

**Wiersbe** - When you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, God gave you "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3+). You now have your inheritance! **All you need do is appropriate that inheritance by faith** and draw on "His riches in glory" (Phil. 4:19+). The Word of God is the "will" that tells you how rich you are, and **faith** is the key that opens the vault so you can claim your inheritance.

**THOUGHT** - I AGREE WITH WIERSBE OF COURSE, BUT WOULD JUST ADD THE CAVEAT THAT **BY FAITH** REFERS TO **FAITH** THAT OBEYS. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU CAN SAY YOU HAVE **FAITH**, BUT IF YOU DO NOT HAVE OBEDIENCE ENABLED BY HIS SPIRIT, YOUR **FAITH** IS, AS JAMES WOULD SAY, "**DEAD FAITH**" [Jas 2:17, 26+] AND WILL NOT LAY HOLD OF "EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST."

**Wenstrom** adds that "In Genesis 13:14-17, we see Abram trusting the Lord's promise to give him the land of the Canaanites who were at the time of the promise occupying the land. Therefore, he was going to have to walk by means of faith and not sight and trust the Lord to come through on His promises, even though it appeared that this promise would be impossible to fulfill, but with God nothing is impossible. The circumstances did not look promising but Abram trusted in the Lord to deliver on this promise because he knew the Lord was omnipotent. **The principle of faith:** (1) God **speaks** (2) We **hear** His Word (3) We **obey** His Word. ([Genesis Verse by Verse](#))

**Genesis 13:18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.**

- **Dwelt** Hebrews 11:9
- **Mamre:** Ge 14:13 18:1
- **Hebron:** Ge 23:2 35:27 37:14 Nu 13:22 Jos 14:13 Joshua 10:36
- **altar:** Ge 13:4 8:20 12:7,8 Ps 16:8 1Ti 2:8 Genesis 26:25 - built Genesis 33:20 - altar Exodus 6:3 - Jehovah
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Genesis 26:25 (ISAAC) **So he built an altar there** and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

Genesis 33:20 (JACOB) Then **he erected there an altar** and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

Exodus 6:3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.

Hebrews 11:9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

Genesis 14:13 Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the **oaks of Mamre** the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram.

Genesis 18:1 Now the LORD appeared to him by the **oaks of Mamre**, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day.

Source: [Abraham: Following God's Promise](#)

## **ABRAM BUILDS A SECOND ALTAR**

**Then** - When is **then**? After he had lifted his eyes to look (Ge 13:14) and then lifted his feet to walk in obedience to the commands of God. Now he lifts his heart to God in worship and thanksgiving.

**Abram moved his tent** - Abram was moving his tent at the "stops and go's" of the LORD, Who had just commanded him to arise and walk about the land.

**And came and dwelt by the oaks** (aka "[terebinth](#)") of **Mamre**, which are in [Hebron](#), and there he built an altar to the LORD ([Jehovah/ Yahweh](#); Lxx = [kurios](#)) -- Notice Abram builds an altar to Yahweh, but no house for himself, being content with his tent! The **oaks of Mamre** was a grove of [terebinth](#) trees owned by Mamre the Amorite who was in an alliance with Abram in Ge 14:13, 24+. **Hebron** means "alliance," "association," "confederacy" and seems to speak to the alliance Abram made with the pagans in this area. It is interesting to note that an **altar** would have been a more permanent structure than a **tent**. Note also that the **altar** served two purposes: (1) It was for personal worship and (2) The altar was Abram's public testimony to the pagans, a clear witness that there is One living and true God.

**THOUGHT**- One can imagine the pagans asking Abram "What is the purpose of this altar?" Will we see any of these pagans in Heaven? We will have to wait and see! Heaven will be a most fascinating place as we see those we did not expect to see there and sadly do not see those we expected to see there! Will you be there? Have you made a profession of Jesus Christ which falls short of a "possession" of Jesus Christ? Paul writes a sobering warning in the form of two commands "**Test** yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" (2Co 13:5+) See also [How can I know for sure that I will go to heaven when I die? | GotQuestions.org](#)

The first **altar** Abram built was in Shechem at the oak of Moreh, close to the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim (Ge 12:7). From Shechem Abram went to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar. (Ge 12:8). In Ge 13:3-4 Abram returned to this altar after backsliding into Egypt. Finally, here at the **oaks of Mamre** about 2 miles north of Hebron (and about 20 miles south to southwest of Jerusalem) Abram builds his third altar to the LORD. This became Abram's primary residence, and later the residence of his son Isaac (Ge 18:1; Ge 23:2; Ge 35:27; Ge 37:14).

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#### QUESTION - [What is the significance of Hebron in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - The ancient city of Hebron, today called Al-Khalil in Arabic, was located approximately 20 miles south of present-day Jerusalem in the Judean valley (See [Wikipedia](#)). Hebron is significant in the Bible for a couple of reasons. **Hebron** is first mentioned in Genesis 13:18 as a place where [Abram](#) (later known as Abraham) traveled after parting company with his nephew [Lot](#). **At Hebron the Lord first showed Abram the land that would belong to him and his offspring** (Genesis 13:14–17). Later, after the death of King Saul, God told David to go to Hebron, and it became the city where David ruled over Judah for seven years because at that time the Jebusites controlled Jerusalem (2 Samuel 2:1–4, 5:3).

**After his wife, Sarah, died, Abraham still lived in Hebron, which belonged to the Hittites** (Genesis 23). He wanted to bury Sarah there, so he approached a man named Ephron and asked to buy a cave for a burial site. Abraham was so well-respected among the Hittites that they offered to give him any cave he desired. But Abraham insisted on paying full price, and he selected an area called Machpelah, owned by a man named Ephron. Again, Ephron tried to give Abraham the cave, but Abraham insisted on paying full price.

"So Ephron's field in Machpelah near Mamre—both the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field—was deeded to Abraham as his property in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city. Afterward, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre (which is at Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field and the cave in it were deeded to Abraham by the Hittites as a burial site" (Genesis 23:17–20).

This cave in Hebron is also called Kiriath-Arba, and, later, Abraham was also buried there (Genesis 25:10); and Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob (Genesis 47:29–30), and Leah (Genesis 49:30–32). The cave of Machpelah in Hebron is considered by the Jews to be the second holiest site in all Israel. Today it is under Palestinian control and is known to Jewish inhabitants as the Cave (or Tomb) of the Patriarchs. Muslims refer to it as the Sanctuary of Abraham.

The land around Hebron was part of the allotment Joshua gave to Caleb when Israel took the Promised Land (Joshua 14:13). Hebron was a reward for Caleb's faithful service and loyalty to the Lord. Caleb probably desired Hebron because it may have contained the "valley of Eschol" from which the spies had brought great clusters of grapes as proof of the land's bounty (Numbers 13:23). Hebron was later designated as a city of refuge (Joshua 20:1–7).

Hebron became the capital of Judah, and from there [David](#) reigned for seven-and-a-half years. During David's reign in Hebron, [Abner](#), the former commander of Saul's army, took Saul's son [Ish-Bosheth](#) across the Jordan River and set him up as king of Israel. Eventually, however, Abner defected to David's side and vowed to bring all of Israel under David's control (2 Samuel 3:8–

12). When [Joab](#), David's commander learned of this, he was certain Abner was only spying for Ish-Bosheth (2 Samuel 3:24–25). He also hated Abner for killing his brother Asahel at the battle of Gibeon, so he set out for revenge. Joab met Abner in Hebron and pulled him aside under the pretext of having a private conversation. When they were alone, Joab stabbed Abner in the stomach and killed him (2 Samuel 3:27). David was grieved at the news of Abner's death and pronounced a curse on Joab (2 Samuel 3:28–29).

After Ish-Bosheth was assassinated, David meted out justice against the assassins in Hebron; in this way, David's integrity became known throughout all Israel (2 Samuel 4). David was eventually declared Israel's rightful king, and he moved his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:1–5).

David's son [Absalom](#) made Hebron his headquarters while he plotted to steal his father's kingdom (2 Samuel 15:7–9). Absalom had spent time cultivating loyalty from Israel's people, then moved his nefarious plot out from under his father's eye in Jerusalem. He appointed himself king in Hebron, striking fear in David's heart (2 Samuel 15:10, 14). David fled as Absalom moved from Hebron to Jerusalem to take control of the capital. He may have wrongly thought that, since it had worked for David to begin his reign in Hebron, it would also work for him.

Absalom forgot an important truth: David had been anointed by God to rule Israel; Absalom had not. As significant as Hebron was to his ancestors, a cave full of ancestral bones could not replace that anointing. Absalom's brief stint as a self-appointed king of Hebron did not lead to future success, and he died in disgrace (2 Samuel 18:9–14). Regardless of a city or nation's great history, unless God's presence and blessing are on it, it holds no power to bless its inhabitants. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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In Abram's day **Hebron** was the residence of the sons of Heth or Hittites. Hebron played a significant role in Israel's history

- It was a place of Residence—Abram dwelled in Hebron. Ge 13:18
- It was a place of Rest—Abram buys a cave here for the future burial of his family. Ge 23:2-20
- It was a place of Reconnaissance—It was scouted out by the spies. Numbers 13:22
- It was a place of Ruin—It was defeated by Joshua. Joshua 10:1-37
- It was a place of Relegation—This city was assigned to the Levites. Joshua 21:10-13
- It was a place of Refuge—It was designated as a city of refuge. Joshua 20:7
- It was a place of Reward—Caleb expels the Anakims and is given Hebron as a reward. Joshua 14:12-15
- It was a place of Rule—Hebron was David's original capital. 2 Samuel 2:1-3
- It was a place of Royal Birth—This was the birthplace of David's sons. 2 Samuel 3:2
- It was a place of Rebellion—Absalom's rebellion was here. 2 Samuel 15:7-10 (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis -[hardbound copies are scarce](#) - [here is the very affordable digital version](#) - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc)

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### **[Bob Utley](#) - Sacred trees are recurrent themes in early Israel**

1. great tree at Moreh – Gen. 12:6; Deut. 11:30
2. great tree at Mamre – Gen. 13:18; 14:13; 18:1 (cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* 1.10.4)
3. great tree at Shechem – Gen. 35:4; Jdg. 9:6
4. great tree at Zaanannim – Josh. 19:33; Jdg. 4:11
5. great tree at Ophrah – Jdg. 6:11,19
6. great tree at Tabor – 1 Sam. 10:3 (no mention of an altar)

### **OTHER ALTARS IN THE OT**

1. Abel – Gen. 4:4
2. Noah – Gen. 8:20
3. Abram – Gen. 13:18; 15:12-21
4. Isaac – Gen. 26:25
5. Jacob – Gen. 33:20; 35:7
6. Job – Job 1:5